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RUEHLO/AMEMBASSY LONDON 0692  
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RUEAHL/DEPT OF HOMELAND SECURITY CENTER WASHINGTON DC  
RUEAIIA/CIA WASHINGTON DC  
RHEBAAA/DEPT OF ENERGY WASHINGTON DC  
RHEFDIA/DIA WASHINGTON DC  
RUFOADA/JAC MOLESWORTH AFB UK  
RUEATRS/DEPT OF TREASURY WASHDC  
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C O N F I D E N T I A L SECTION 01 OF 02 LAGOS 001121

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E.O. 12958: DECL: 08/22/2016  
TAGS: [EPET](#) [PGOV](#) [ASEC](#) [PTER](#) [CASC](#) [NI](#)  
SUBJECT: DELTA SITREP #7

Classified By: Consul General Brian L. Browne for Reasons 1.4 (D & E)

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HOSTAGE WELFARE UPDATE  
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11. (C) SSS continues to negotiate with the kidnappers. Governor Odili told us that the talks had hit a momentary pause because of some disagreement among the kidnappers. Apparently, the kidnappers are somewhat factionalized and discussions were being conducted with both factions. Now, a single track has been reestablished. An obviously tired Governor Odili said the release was now imminent, perhaps as early as tonight.

12. (C) SSS negotiators, still focusing on an immediate release, have not forwarded proof of life questions to the kidnappers. Nor are we sure that medicines have been passed. We again raised with Governor Odili the need to pass medicine to protect the health of the hostages, especially from malaria and in the case of Amcit Royce Anthony, to avoid complications due to hypertension.

13. (C) Security consultants for the affected companies continue to rely on the Director of Rivers State SSS as their point of contact. (Note: The security consultants gave the POL questions to the SSS on Sunday but SSS withheld them because they thought release was imminent. End Note.) Additionally, the security consultants will contemplate establishing an alternate line of communication if the SSS proves unable or unwilling to deliver the POL questions or provide new information within the next few days.

14. (C) Prior to yesterday's incident in which several of his men were killed by Nigerian soldiers, FNDIC militant leader Tom Polo reportedly sent a message to the kidnappers threatening to seize the hostages from the group if they had not voluntarily released the hostages within 48 hours. According to Dr. Godknows Igali, Bayelsa Secretary of State Government, Tom Polo was originally incensed at learning of

the death of his fighters. Evidently, Polo held a meeting last night with his top lieutenants. Retaliation was discussed but ultimately discarded, Igali believed. However, Igali was less sanguine that Tom Polo would now take an active role in dissuading other Ijaw groups from seizing hostages. Prominent Ijaw Chief Edwin Clark stated he had been primed to issue a statement condemning kidnapping. However, yesterday,s incident changed his mind. He felt President Obasanjo,s statements threatening police action against Delta militants had encouraged the military to be overly aggressive, indirectly leading to yesterday,s violent encounters.

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MILITARY UPDATE  
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15. (C) According to Igali, 17 people were killed in yesterday,s skirmish. Twelve were Tom Polo,s men, the rest were community leaders, including an Ijaw traditional ruler. Apparently, this was an unfortunate accident. While on their way to release the shell employee to the Bayelsa Government, Tom Polo,s men encountered five Nigerian military Joint Task Force (JTF) patrol vessels that were escorting a barge\*operated by Shell. The militants claim the JTF personnel opened fire without warning. Shell is concerned that it will be blamed and that militant ire may direct itself at Shell.

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COMMENT  
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16. (C) The tragic firefight between the JTF patrols and the militants has further sullied the atmosphere in the Delta. Tom Polo and his men are indignant their colleagues were killed in the act of doing something good. Shell is uneasy. More importantly, the shooting will register deeply with the hostage takers. In addition to their ransom demands, they most likely will seek assurances against attack should they free their captive sextet. END COMMENT.  
BROWNE